

**POEMS 1918-21**

**INCLUDING**

**THREE PORTRAITS**

**AND**

**FOUR CANTOS**

**BY**

**EZRA POUND**

# **The Project Gutenberg eBook of Poems 1918-21, Including Three Portraits and Four Cantos, by Ezra Pound**

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## POEMS 1918-21

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## POEMS 1918-21

INCLUDING  
THREE PORTRAITS

AND  
**FOUR CANTOS**

BY  
EZRA POUND

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POEMS 1918-1921

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# HOMAGE TO SEXTUS PROPERTIUS

## I

SHADES of Callimachus, Coan ghosts of Philetas

It is in your grove I would walk,

I who come first from the clear font

Bringing the Grecian orgies into Italy,  
and the dance into Italy.

Who hath taught you so subtle a measure,  
in what hall have you heard it;

What foot beat out your time-bar, what water has mellowed your whistles?

Out-weariers of Apollo will, as we know, continue their Martian  
generalities.

We have kept our erasers in order,  
A new-fangled chariot follows the flower-hung horses;  
A young Muse with young loves clustered about her  
ascends with me into the aether, ...  
And there is no high-road to the Muses.

Annalists will continue to record Roman reputations,  
Celebrities from the Trans-Caucasus will belaud Roman celebrities  
And expound the distentions of Empire,

But for something to read in normal circumstances?  
For a few pages brought down from the forked hill unsullied?  
I ask a wreath which will not crush my head.

And there is no hurry about it;  
I shall have, doubtless, a boom after my funeral,  
Seeing that long standing increases all things regardless of quality.

And who would have known the towers

pulled down by a deal-wood horse;  
Or of Achilles withstanding waters by Simois  
Or of Hector spattering wheel-rims,

Or of Polydramantus, by Scamander, or Helenus and Deiphobos?  
Their door-yards would scarcely know them, or Paris.  
Small talk O Ilion, and O Troad  
twice taken by Oetian gods,  
If Homer had not stated your case!

And I also among the later nephews of this city  
shall have my dog's day  
With no stone upon my contemptible sepulchre,  
My vote coming from the temple of Phoebus in Lycia, at Patara,  
And in the mean time my songs will travel,  
And the devirginated young ladies will enjoy them  
when they have got over the strangeness,  
For Orpheus tamed the wild beasts—  
and held up the Thracian river;  
And Citharaon shook up the rocks by Thebes and danced them into a  
bulwark at his pleasure,  
And you, O Polyphemus? Did harsh Galatea almost  
Turn to your dripping horses, because of a tune, under Aetna?  
We must look into the matter.  
Bacchus and Apollo in favour of it,  
There will be a crowd of young women doing homage to my palaver,  
Though my house is not propped up by Taenarian columns from Laconia  
(associated with Neptune and Cerberus),  
Though it is not stretched upon gilded beams;  
My orchards do not lie level and wide  
as the forests of Phaeacia,  
the luxurious and Ionian,  
Nor are my caverns stuffed stiff with a Marcan vintage,  
(My cellar does not date from Numa Pompilius,  
Nor bristle with wine jars)  
Yet the companions of the Muses



will keep their collective nose in my books,  
And weary with historical data, they will turn to my dance tune.

Happy who are mentioned in my pamphlets, the songs shall be a fine tomb-  
stone over their beauty.

But against this?  
Neither expensive pyramids scraping the stars in their route,  
Nor houses modelled upon that of Jove in East Elis,  
Nor the monumental effigies of Mausolus,  
are a complete elucidation of death.  
Flame burns, rain sinks into the cracks  
And they all go to rack ruin beneath the thud of the years.

Stands genius a deathless adornment,  
a name not to be worn out with the years.

## II

I HAD been seen in the shade, recumbent on cushioned Helicon,  
the water dripping from Bellerophon's horse,  
Alba, your kings, and the realm your folk  
have constructed with such industry  
Shall be yawned out on my lyre—with such industry.  
My little mouth shall gobble in such great fountains,  
“Wherefrom father Ennius, sitting before I came, hath drunk.”

I had rehearsed the Curian brothers, and made remarks on the Horatian  
javelin  
(Near Q. H. Flaccus' book-stall).

“Of” royal Aemilia, drawn on the memorial raft,  
“Of” the victorious delay of Fabius, and the left-handed  
battle at Cannae,  
Of lares fleeing the “Roman seat” ...  
I had sung of all these

And of Hannibal

And of Hannibal,

and of Jove protected by geese.

And Phoebus looking upon me from the Castalian tree,  
Said then "You idiot! What are you doing with that water;  
"Who has ordered a book about heroes?"

You need, Propertius, not think  
"About acquiring that sort of a reputation.

"Soft fields must be worn by small wheels,  
"Your pamphlets will be thrown, thrown often into a chair  
"Where a girl waits alone for her lover;

"Why wrench your page out of its course?  
"No keel will sink with your genius

"Let another oar churn the water,  
"Another wheel, the arena; mid-crowd is as bad as mid-sea."

He had spoken, and pointed me a place with his plectrum:

Orgies of vintages, an earthen image of Silenus  
Strengthened with rushes, Tegaeon Pan,  
The small birds of the Cytharean mother,  
their Punic faces dyed in the Gorgon's lake;  
Nine girls, from as many countrysides  
bearing her offerings in their unhardened hands,

Such my cohort and setting. And she bound ivy to his thyrsos;  
Fitted song to the strings;

Roses twined in her hands.  
And one among them looked at me with face offended,  
Calliope:

"Content ever to move with white swans!  
"Nor will the noise of high horses lead you ever to battle;  
"Nor will the public criers ever have your name  
in their classic horns,  
"Nor Mars shout you in the wood at Aeonium,  
Nor where Rome ruins German riches,  
"Nor where the Rhine flows with barbarous blood,  
and flood carries wounded Suevi.

"Obviously crowned lovers at unknown doors,  
 "Night dogs, the marks of a drunken scurry,  
 "These are your images, and from you the sorcerizing  
                                 of shut-in young ladies,  
 "The wounding of austere men by chicane."

Thus Mistress Calliope,  
Dabbling her hands in the fount, thus she  
Stiffened our face with the backwash of Philetas the Coan.

### III

MIDNIGHT, and a letter comes to me from our mistress:

Telling me to come to Tibur, *At* once!!:  
 “Bright tips reach up from twin towers,  
 Anienan spring water falls into flat-spread pools.”

What *is* to be done about it?  
                   Shall I entrust myself to entangled shadows,  
 Where bold hands may do violence to my person?

Yet if I postpone my obedience  
   because of this respectable terror  
 I shall be prey to lamentations worse than a nocturnal assailant.  
*And* I shall be in the wrong,  
   *and* it will last a twelve month,  
 For her hands have no kindness me-ward,

Nor is there anyone to whom lovers are not sacred at midnight  
And in the Via Sciro.

If any man would be a lover  
                   he may walk on the Scythian coast,  
 No barbarism would go to the extent of doing him harm,  
 The moon will carry his candle.

the stars will point out the stumbles,  
Cupid will carry lighted torches before him  
and keep mad dogs off his ankles.

Thus all roads are perfectly safe  
and at any hour;  
Who so indecorous as to shed the pure gore of a suitor? I  
Cypris is his cicerone.

What if undertakers follow my track,  
such a death is worth dying.  
She would bring frankincense and wreaths to my tomb,  
She would sit like an ornament on my pyre.

Gods' aid, let not my bones lie in a public location  
with crowds too assiduous in their crossing of it;  
For thus are tombs of lovers most desecrated.

May a woody and sequestered place cover me with its foliage  
Or may I inter beneath the hummock  
of some as yet uncatalogued sand;  
At any rate I shall not have my epitaph in a high road.

#### IV

### DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH LYGDAMUS

TELL me the truths which you hear of our constant young lady,  
Lygdamus,  
And may the bought yoke of a mistress lie with  
equitable weight on your shoulders;  
For I am swelled up with inane pleasurable  
and deceived by your reference  
To things which you think I would like to believe.

No messenger should come wholly empty,  
    and a slave should fear plausibilities;  
    Much conversation is as good as having a home.  
    Out with it, tell it to me, all of it, from the beginning,  
I guzzle with outstretched ears.  
Thus? She wept into uncombed hair,  
    And you saw it,  
Vast waters flowed from her eyes?  
    You, you Lygdamus  
Saw her stretched on her bed,—  
    it was no glimpse in a mirror;  
No gawds on her snowy hands, no orfevrerie,  
Sad garment draped on her slender arms.  
Her escritaires lay shut by the bed-feet.  
Sadness hung over the house, and the desolated female attendants  
Were desolated because she had told them her dreams.

She was veiled in the midst of that place,  
Damp wooly handkerchiefs were stuffed into her undryable eyes,  
And a querulous noise responded to our solicitous reprobations.

For which things you will get a reward from me, Lygdamus?  
To say many things is equal to having a home.

And the other woman “has not enticed me  
    by her pretty manners,  
“She has caught me with herbaceous poison,  
    she twiddles the spiked wheel of a rhombus,  
“She stews puffed frogs, snake’s bones, the moulded feathers of screech  
    owls,

“She binds me with ravvles of shrouds.  
    “Black spiders spin in her bed!  
“Let her lovers snore at her in the morning!  
    “May the gout cramp up her feet!  
“Does he like me to sleep here alone, Lygdamus?

“Will he say nasty things at my funeral?”

And you expect me to believe this  
after twelve months of discomfort?

**V**

**1**

NOW if ever it is time to cleanse Helicon;  
to lead Emathian horses afield,  
And to name over the census of my chiefs in the Roman camp.  
If I have not the faculty, "The bare attempt would be praise-worthy."  
"In things of similar magnitude  
the mere will to act is sufficient."

The primitive ages sang Venus,  
the last sings of a tumult,  
And I also will sing war when this matter of a girl is exhausted.

I with my beak hauled ashore would proceed in a more stately manner,  
My Muse is eager to instruct me in a new gamut, or gambetto,  
Up, up my soul, from your lowly cantilation,  
put on a timely vigour,

Oh august Pierides! Now for a large-mouthed product.  
Thus:

“The Euphrates denies its protection to the Parthian  
and apologizes for Crassus,”  
And “It is, I think, India which now gives necks to your triumph,”  
And so forth, Augustus. “Virgin Arabia shakes in her inmost dwelling.”  
If any land shrink into a distant seacoast,  
it is a mere postponement of your domination,  
And I shall follow the camp, I shall be duly celebrated,  
for singing the affairs of your cavalry.  
May the fates watch over my day.

## 2

Yet you ask on what account I write so many love-lyrics  
And whence this soft book comes into my mouth.  
Neither Calliope nor Apollo sung these things into my ear,  
My genius is no more than a girl.

If she with ivory fingers drive a tune through the lyre,  
    We look at the process  
How easy the moving fingers; if hair is mussed on her forehead,  
If she goes in a gleam of Cos, in a slither of dyed stuff,  
There is a volume in the matter; if her eyelids sink into sleep,  
There are new jobs for the author,  
And if she plays with me with her shirt off,  
    We shall construct many Iliads.  
And whatever she does or says  
    We shall spin long yarns out of nothing,

Thus much the fates have allotted me, and if, Maecenas,  
I were able to lead heroes into armour, I would not,  
Neither would I warble of Titans, nor of Ossa  
                    spiked onto Olympus,  
Nor of causeways over Pelion,  
Nor of Thebes in its ancient respectability,  
    nor of Homer's reputation in Pergamus,  
Nor of Xerxes' two-barreled kingdom, nor of Remus and his royal family,  
Nor of dignified Carthaginian characters,  
Nor of Welsh mines and the profit Marus had out of them.  
I should remember Caesar's affairs ...  
                    for a background,  
Although Callimachus did without them,  
                    and without Theseus,  
Without an inferno, without Achilles attended of gods,  
Without Ixion, and without the sons of Menoetius and  
    the Argo and without Jove's grave and the Titans.

And my ventricles do not palpitate to Caesarial *ore rotundos*,  
Nor to the tune of the Phrygian fathers.

Sailor, of winds; a plowman, concerning his oxen;  
Soldier, the enumeration of wounds; the sheep-feeder, of ewes;  
We, in our narrow bed, turning aside from battles:  
Each man where he can, wearing out the day in his manner.



It is noble to die of love, and honourable to remain  
uncuckolded for a season.  
And she speaks ill of light women,  
and will not praise Homer  
Because Helen's conduct is "unsuitable."

## VI

WHEN, when, and whenever death closes our eyelids,  
Moving naked over Acheron  
    Upon the one raft, victor and conquered together,  
Marius and Jugurtha together,  
                                    one tangle of shadows.

Caesar plots against India,  
Tigris and Euphrates shall, from now on, flow at his bidding,  
Tibet shall be full of Roman policemen,  
The Parthians shall get used to our statuary  
  and acquire a Roman religion;  
One raft on the veiled flood of Acheron,  
Marius and Jugurtha together.

Nor at my funeral either will there be any long trail,  
                     bearing ancestral lares and images;  
 No trumpets filled with my emptiness,  
 Nor shall it be on an Atalic bed;  
                     The perfumed cloths shall be absent.  
 A small plebeian procession.

Enough, enough and in plenty  
There will be three books at my obsequies

which I take, my not unworthy gift, to Persephone.

You will follow the bare scarified breast  
Nor will you be weary of calling my name, nor too weary  
    To place the last kiss on my lips  
When the Syrian onyx is broken.

    “He who is now vacant dust  
    “Was once the slave of one passion:”  
Give that much inscription  
    “Death why tardily come?”

You, sometimes, will lament a lost friend,  
    For it is a custom:  
This care for past men,

Since Adonis was gored in IDALIA, and the Cytharean  
Ran crying with out-spread hair,  
    In vain, you call back the shade,  
In vain, Cynthia. Vain call to unanswering shadow,  
    Small talk comes from small bones.

## VII

ME happy, night, night full of brightness;  
Oh couch made happy by my long delectations;  
How many words talked out with abundant candles;  
Struggles when the lights were taken away;  
Now with bared breasts she wrestled against me,  
    Tunic spread in delay;  
And she then opening my eyelids fallen in sleep,  
Her lips upon them; and it was her mouth saying:  
    Sluggard!

In how many varied embraces, our changing arms,

Her kisses, how many, lingering on my lips.  
“Turn not Venus into a blinded motion,  
    Eyes are the guides of love,  
Paris took Helen naked coming from the bed of Menelaus,  
Endymion’s naked body, bright bait for Diana,”  
    —such at least is the story.

While our fates twine together, sate we our eyes with love;  
For long night comes upon you  
    and a day when no day returns.  
Let the gods lay chains upon us  
    so that no day shall unbind them.

Fool who would set a term to love’s madness,  
For the sun shall drive with black horses,  
    earth shall bring wheat from barley,  
The flood shall move toward the fountain  
    Ere love know moderations,  
    The fish shall swim in dry streams.

No, now while it may be, let not the fruit of life cease.

    Dry wreaths drop their petals,  
        their stalks are woven in baskets,  
To-day we take the great breath of lovers,  
    to-morrow fate shuts us in.

Though you give all your kisses  
    you give but a few.”

Nor can I shift my pains to other  
    Hers will I be dead,  
If she confers such nights upon me,  
long is my life, long in years,  
If she give me many,  
    God am I for the time.

## VIII

JOVE, be merciful to that unfortunate woman

Or an ornamental death will be held to your debit,  
The time is come, the air heaves in torridity,  
The dry earth pants against the canicular heat,  
But this heat is not the root of the matter:  
She did not respect all the gods;  
Such derelictions have destroyed other young ladies aforetime,  
And what they swore in the cupboard  
wind and wave scattered away.

Was Venus exacerbad by the existence of a comparable equal?  
Is the ornamental goddess full of envy?

Have you contemned Juno's Pelasgian temples,  
         Have you denied Pallas good eyes?  
 Or is it my tongue that wrongs you  
                                 with perpetual ascription of graces?  
 There comes, it seems, and at any rate  
         through perils, (so many) and of a vexed life,  
 The gentler hour of an ultimate day.

Lo mooded the first years with averted head,  
     And now drinks Nile water like a god,  
 Ino in her young days fled pellmell out of Thebes,  
     Andromeda was offered to a sea-serpent  
         and respectably married to Perseus,  
 Callisto, disguised as a bear,  
         wandered through the Arcadian prairies  
     While a black veil was over her stars,  
 What if your fates are accelerated;  
         your quiet hour put forward,  
 You may find interment pleasing,



Persephone and Dis, Dis, have mercy upon her,  
 There are enough women in hell,  
                                   quite enough beautiful women,  
 Iope, and Tyro, and Pasiphae, and the formal girls of Achaia,  
 And out of Troad, and from the Campania,  
 Death has its tooth in the lot,  
                                   Avernus lusts for the lot of them,  
 Beauty is not eternal, no man has perennial fortune,  
 Slow foot, or swift foot, death delays but for a season.

### 3

My light, light of my eyes,  
                                   you are escaped from great peril,  
 Go back to Great Dian's dances bearing suitable gifts,  
 Pay up your vow of night watches  
                                   to Dian goddess of virgins,  
 And unto me also pay debt: the ten nights of your company you have  
                                   promised me.

### X

**L**IGHT, light of my eyes, at an exceeding late hour  
                                   I was wandering,  
 And intoxicated,  
                                   and no servant was leading me,  
 And a minute crowd of small boys came from opposite,  
                                   I do not know what boys,  
 And I am afraid of numerical estimate,  
 And some of them shook little torches,  
                                   and others held onto arrows,  
 And the rest laid their chains upon me,

and they were naked, the lot of them,  
And one of the lot was given to lust.

“That incensed female has consigned him to our pleasure.”  
So spoke. And the noose was over my neck.  
And another said “Get him plumb in the middle!  
“Shove along there, shove along!”  
And another broke in upon this:  
“He thinks that we are not gods.”

“And she has been waiting for the scoundrel,  
and in a new Sidonian night cap,  
And with more than Arabian odours,  
God knows where he has been,  
She could scarcely keep her eyes open  
enter that much for his bail.  
Get along now!”

We were coming near to the house,  
and they gave another yank to my cloak,  
And it was morning, and I wanted to see if she was alone, and resting,  
And Cynthia was alone in her bed.  
I was stupefied.  
I had never seen her looking so beautiful  
No, not when she was tunick'd in purple.

Such aspect was presented to me, me recently emerged from my visions,  
You will observe that pure form has its value.

“You are a very early inspector of mistresses.  
“Do you think I have adopted your habits?”  
There were upon the bed no signs of a voluptuous encounter,  
No signs of a second incumbent.

She continued:  
“No incubus has crushed his body against me,  
“Though spirits are celebrated for adultery.  
“A lot of them, a lot of them, a lot of them.”

“And I am going to the temple of Vesta ...”  
and so on.

Since that day I have had no pleasant nights.

**XI**

**I**



THE harsh acts of your levity!  
Many and many.  
I am hung here, a scare-crow for lovers.

## 2

Escape! There is, O Idiot, no escape,  
 Flee if you like into Ranaus,  
                   desire will follow you thither,  
 Though you heave into the air upon the gilded Pegasean back,  
           Though you had the feathery sandals of Perseus  
 To lift you up through split air,  
           The high tracks of Hermes would not afford you shelter.

Amor stands upon you, Love drives upon lovers,  
a heavy mass on free necks.

It is our eyes you flee, not the city,  
You do nothing, you plot inane schemes against me,  
Languidly you stretch out the snare  
with which I am already familiar,

And yet again, and newly rumour strikes on my ears,

Rumours of you throughout the city,  
and no good rumour among them.

“You should not believe hostile tongues,  
 “Beauty is slander’s cock-shy,  
 “All lovely women have known this,”  
 “Your glory is not outblotted by venom,”  
 “Phoebus our witness, your hands are unspotted,”

A foreign lover brought down Helen's kingdom,  
and she was led back living home:

and she was too much, living, home,  
The Cytharean brought low by Mars' lechery  
reigns in respectable heavens, ...

Oh, oh, and enough of this,  
by dew-spread caverns,  
The Muses clinging to the mossy ridges;  
to the ledge of the rocks;  
Zeus' clever rapes, in the old days,  
combusted Semele's, of Io strayed.  
Of how the bird flew from Trojan rafters,  
Ida has lain with a shepherd, she has slept between sheep.

Even there, no escape  
Not the Hyrcanian seabord, not in seeking the shore of Eos.

All things are forgiven for one night of your games....  
Though you walk in the Via Sacra, with a peacock's tail for a fan.

## XII

WHO, who will be the next man to entrust his girl to a friend?

Love interferes with fidelities;  
The gods have brought shame on their relatives;  
Each man wants the pomegranate for himself;  
Amiable and harmonious people are pushed incontinent into duels,  
A Trojan and adulterous person came to Menelaus under the rites of  
hospitium,  
And there was a case in Colchis, Jason and that woman in Colchis;  
And besides, Lynceus,  
you were drunk.

Could you endure such promiscuity?  
She was not renowned for fidelity;  
But to jab a knife in my vitals, to have passed on a swig of poison,

Preferable, my dear boy, my dear Lynceus,  
Comrade, comrade of my life, of my purse, of my person;  
But in one bed, in one bed alone, my dear Lynceus

    I deprecate your attendance;  
I would ask a like boon of Jove.

And you write of Achelöus, who contended with Hercules,  
You write of Adrastus' horses and the funeral rites of Achenor,  
And you will not leave off imitating Aeschylus.

    Though you make a hash of Antimachus,  
You think you are going to do Homer.

    And still a girl scorns the gods,  
Of all these young women  
    not one has enquired the cause of the world,  
Nor the modus of lunar eclipses

    Nor whether there be any patch left of us  
After we cross the infernal ripples,  
    nor if the thunder fall from predestination;  
Nor anything else of importance.

Upon the Actian marshes Virgil is Phoebus' chief of police,  
    He can tabulate Caesar's great ships.

He thrills to Ilian arms,

    He shakes the Trojan weapons of Aeneas,  
And casts stores on Lavinian beaches.

Make way, ye Roman authors,

                                clear the street O ye Greeks,  
For a much larger Iliad is in the course of construction  
                                (and to Imperial order)

Clear the streets O ye Greeks!

And you also follow him "neath Phrygian pine shade:

    Thyrsis and Daphnis upon whittled reeds,  
And how ten sins can corrupt young maidens;  
    Kids for a bribe and pressed udders,  
Happy selling poor loves for cheap apples.

Tityrus might have sung the same vixen;  
Corydon tempted Alexis,  
Head farmers do likewise, and lying weary amid their oats  
They get praise from tolerant Hamadryads.”

Go on, to Ascraeus’ prescription, the ancient,  
respected, Wordsworthian:  
“A flat field for rushes, grapes grow on the slope.”

And behold me, small fortune left in my house.  
Me, who had no general for a grandfather!  
I shall triumph among young ladies of indeterminate character,  
My talent acclaimed in their banquets,  
I shall be honoured with yesterday’s wreaths.  
And the god strikes to the marrow.

Like a trained and performing tortoise,  
I would make verse in your fashion, if she should command it,  
With her husband asking a remission of sentence,  
And even this infamy would not attract numerous readers  
Were there an erudite or violent passion,  
For the nobleness of the populace brooks nothing below its own altitude.  
One must have resonance, resonance and sonority ...  
like a goose.

Varro sang Jason’s expedition,  
Varro, of his great passion Leucadia,  
There is song in the parchment; Catullus the highly indecorous,  
Of Lesbia, known above Helen;  
And in the dyed pages of Calvus,  
Calvus mourning Quintilia,  
And but now Gallus had sung of Lycoris.  
Fair, fairest Lycoris—  
The waters of Styx poured over the wound:  
And now Propertius of Cynthia, taking his stand among these.



# LANGUE D'OC

*Alba*

*WHEN the nightingale to his mate  
Sings day-long and night late  
My love and I keep state  
In bower,  
In flower,  
'Till the watchman on the tower  
Cry:  
"Up! Thou rascal, Rise,  
I see the white  
Light  
And the night  
Flies."*

## I

*Compleynt of a gentleman who has been waiting outside for some  
time*

*O PLASMATOUR and true celestial light,  
Lord powerful, engirdled all with might,  
Give my good-fellow aid in fools' despite  
Who stirs not forth this night,  
And day comes on.*

*"Sst! my good fellow, art awake or sleeping?  
Sleep thou no more. I see the star upleaping  
That hath the dawn in keeping,*

And day comes on!

“Hi! Harry, hear me, for I sing aright  
Sleep not thou now, I hear the bird in flight  
That plaineth of the going of the night,  
And day comes on!

“Come now! Old swenkin! Rise up, from thy bed,  
I see the signs upon the welkin spread,  
If thou come not, the cost be on thy head.  
And day comes on!

“And here I am since going down of sun,  
And pray to God that is St. Mary’s son,  
To bring thee safe back, my companion.  
And day comes on.

“And thou out here beneath the porch of stone  
Badest me to see that a good watch was done,  
And now thou’lt none of me, and wilt have none  
Of song of mine.”

*(Bass voice from within.)*

“Wait, my good fellow. For such joy I take  
With her venust and noblest to my make  
To hold embraced, and will not her forsake  
For yammer of the cuckold,  
Though day break.”  
*(Girart Bornello.)*

## II

*Avril*

--- --

WHEN the springtime is sweet  
And the birds repeat  
Their new song in the leaves,  
'Tis meet  
A man go where he will.

But from where my heart is set  
No message I get;  
My heart all wakes and grieves;  
Defeat  
Or luck, I must have my fill.

Our love comes out  
Like the branch that turns about  
On the top of the hawthorne,  
With frost and hail at night  
Suffers despite  
'Till the sun come, and the green leaf on the bough.

I remember the young day  
When we set strife away,  
And she gave me such gesning,  
Her love and her ring:  
God grant I die not by any man's stroke  
'Till I have my hand 'neath her cloak.

I care not for their clamour  
Who have come between me and my charmer,  
For I know how words run loose,  
Big talk and little use.  
Spoilers of pleasure,  
We take their measure.

*(Guilhem de Peitieu.)*



*Descant on a Theme by Cerclamon*

WHEN the sweet air goes bitter,  
And the cold birds twitter  
Where the leaf falls from the twig,  
I sough and sing  
that Love goes out  
Leaving me no power to hold him.

Of love I have naught  
Save troubles and sad thought,  
And nothing is grievous  
as I desirous,  
Wanting only what  
No man can get or has got.

With the noblest that stands in men's sight,  
If all the world be in despite  
I care not a glove.  
Where my love is, there is a glitter of sun;  
God give me life, and let my course run  
'Till I have her I love  
To lie with and prove.

I do not live, nor cure me,  
Nor feel my ache—great as it is,  
For love will give  
me no respite,  
Nor do I know when I turn left or right  
nor when I go out.  
For in her is all my delight  
And all that can save me.

I shake and burn and quiver  
From love, awake and in swevyn,  
Such fear I have she deliver

SUCH LOVE I HAVE SHE GOTTEN

me not from pain,  
Who know not how to ask her;  
Who can not.

Two years, three years I seek  
And though I fear to speak out,  
Still she must know it.

If she won't have me now, Death is my portion,  
Would I had died that day  
I came into her sway.  
God! How softly this kills!  
When her love look steals on me.  
Killed me she has, I know not how it was,  
For I would not look on a woman.

Joy I have none, if she make me not mad  
Or set me quiet, or bid me chatter.  
Good is it to me if she flout  
Or turn me inside out, and about.  
My ill doth she turn sweet.  
How swift it is.  
For I am traist and loose,  
I am true, or a liar,  
All vile, or all gentle,  
Or shaking between,

as she desire,  
I, Cerclamon, sorry and glad,  
The man whom love had  
and has ever;  
Alas! who'er it please or pain,  
She can me retain.

I am gone from one joy,  
From one I loved never so much,  
She by one touch  
Reft me away;



So swiftly goes the night  
And day comes on.

“My pretty boy, make we our play again  
Here in the orchard where the birds complain,  
'Till the traist watcher his song unrein,  
Ah God! How swift the night  
And day comes on.”

“Out of the wind that blows from her,  
That dancing and gentle is and Thereby pleasanter,  
Have I drunk a draught, sweeter than scent of myrrh.  
Ah God! How swift the night.  
And day comes on.”

*Venust the lady, and none lovelier,  
For her great beauty, many men look on her,  
Out of my love will her heart not stir.  
By God, how swift the night.  
And day comes on.*

## V

### *Canzon*

I ONLY, and who elrische pain support  
Know out love's heart o'erborne by overlove,  
For my desire that is so firm and straight  
And unchanged since I found her in my sight  
And unturned since she came within my glance,  
That far from her my speech springs up aflame;  
Near her comes not. So press the words to arrest it.

I am blind to others, and their retort  
I hear not. In her alone, I see, move,  
Wonder.... And jest not. And the words dilate

Not truth; but mouth speaks not the heart outright:  
I could not walk roads, flats, dales, hills, by chance,  
To find charm's sum within one single frame  
As God hath set in her t'assay and test it.

And I have passed in many a goodly court  
To find in hers more charm than rumour thereof ...  
In solely hers. Measure and sense to mate,  
Youth and beauty learned in all delight,  
Gentrice did nurse her up, and so advance  
Her fair beyond all reach of evil fame,  
To clear her worth, no shadow hath oppresst it.

Her contact flats not out, falls not off short....  
Let her, I pray, guess out the sense hereof  
For never will it stand in open prate  
Until my inner heart stand in daylight,  
So that heart pools him when her eyes entrance,  
As never doth the Rhone, full'd and untame,  
Pool, where the freshest tumult hurl to crest it.

Flimsy another's joy, false and distort,  
No paregale that she springs not above ...  
Her love-touch by none other mensurate.  
To have it not? Alas! Though the pains bite  
Deep, torture is but galzear'dy and dance,  
For in my thought my lust hath touched his aim.  
God! Shall I get no more! No fact to best it!

No delight I, from now, in dance or sport,  
Nor will these toys a tinkle of pleasure prove,  
Compared to her, whom no loud profligate  
Shall leak abroad how much she makes my right.  
Is this too much? If she count not mischance  
What I have said, then no. But if she blame,  
Then tear ye out the tongue that hath expresst it.

The song begs you: Count not this speech ill chance,  
But if you count the song worth your acclaim,  
Arnaut cares lyt who praise or who contest it.

*(Arnaut Daniel, a. d. about 1190.)*

# MOEURS CONTEMPORAINES

## I

### 1

*Mr. Styrax*

MR. HECATOMB STYRAX, the owner of a large estate  
and of large muscles,  
A “blue” and a climber of mountains, has married  
at the age of 28,  
He being at that age a virgin,  
The term “virgo” being made male in mediaeval latinity;  
His ineptitudes  
Have driven his wife from one religious excess to another.  
She has abandoned the vicar  
For he was lacking in vehemence;  
She is now the high-priestess  
Of a modern and ethical cult,  
And even now Mr. Styrax  
Does not believe in aesthetics.

### 2

His brother has taken to gipsies,  
But the son-in-law of Mr. H. Styrax  
Objects to perfumed cigarettes.  
In the parlance of Niccolo Macchiavelli,  
“Thus things proceed in their circle”;  
And thus the empire is maintained.

## II

*Clara*

AT sixteen she was a potential celebrity  
With a distaste for caresses.  
She now writes to me from a convent;  
Her life is obscure and troubled;  
Her second husband will not divorce her;  
Her mind is, as ever, uncultivated,  
And no issue presents itself.  
She does not desire her children,  
Or any more children.  
Her ambition is vague and indefinite,  
She will neither stay in, nor come out.

## III

*Soirée*

UPON learning that the mother wrote verses,  
And that the father wrote verses,  
And that the youngest son was in a publisher's office,  
And that the friend of the second daughter  
was undergoing a novel,  
The young American pilgrim  
Exclaimed:  
"This is a darn'd clever bunch!"

## IV



*Sketch 48 b. II*

AT the age of 27  
Its home mail is still opened by its maternal parent  
And its office mail may be opened by  
its parent of the opposite gender.  
It is an officer,  
and a gentleman,  
and an architect.

V

1

*“Nodier raconte ...”*

AT a friend of my wife’s there is a photograph,  
A faded, pale, brownish photograph,  
Of the times when the sleeves were large,  
Silk, stiff and large above the *lacertus*,  
That is, the upper arm,  
And décolleté....

It is a lady,  
She sits at a harp,  
Playing,

And by her left foot, in a basket,  
Is an infant, aged about 14 months,  
The infant beams at the parent,  
The parent re-beams at its offspring.  
The basket is lined with satin,  
There is a satin-like bow on the harp.

2

And in the home of the novelist  
There is a satin-like bow on an harp.

You enter and pass hall after hall,  
Conservatory follows conservatory,  
Lilies lift their white symbolical cups,  
Whence their symbolical pollen has been excerpted,  
Near them I noticed an harp  
And the blue satin ribbon,  
And the copy of “Hatha Yoga”  
And the neat piles of unopened, unopening books,

And she spoke to me of the monarch,  
And of the purity of her soul.

## VI

*Stele*

AFTER years of continence  
he hurled himself into a sea of six women.  
Now, quenched as the brand of Meleagar,  
he lies by the poluphloisboious sea-coast.

παραὰ Θῆνα Πολοφλοῖσβοιο Θαλάσσης.

SISTE VIATOR.

## VII

*I Vecchii*

THEY will come no more,  
The old men with beautiful manners.

Il était comme un tout petit garçon  
With his blouse full of apples  
And sticking out all the way round;  
Blagueur! “Con gli occhi onesti e tardi,”

And he said:

“Oh! Abelard,” as if the topic  
Were much too abstruse for his comprehension,  
And he talked about “the Great Mary,”  
And said: “Mr. Pound is shocked at my levity,”  
When it turned out he meant Mrs. Ward.

And the other was rather like my bust by Gaudier,  
Or like a real Texas colonel,  
He said: “Why flay dead horses?”  
“There was once a man called Voltaire.”

And he said they used to cheer Verdi,  
In Rome, after the opera,  
And the guards couldn’t stop them,

And that was an anagram for Vittorio  
Emanuele Re D’ Italia,  
And the guards couldn’t stop them.

Old men with beautiful manners,  
Sitting in the Row of a morning;  
Walking on the Chelsea Embankment.

**VIII**

*Ritratto*

AND she said:

“You remember Mr. Lowell,

“He was your ambassador here?”

And I said: “That was before I arrived.”

And she said:

“He stomped into my bedroom....

(By that time she had got on to Browning.)

“ ... stomped into my bedroom....

“And said: ‘Do I,

“ ‘I ask you, Do I

“ ‘Care too much for society dinners?’

“And I wouldn’t say that he didn’t.

“Shelley used to live in this house.”

She was a very old lady,

I never saw her again.

# **HUGH SELWYN MAUBERLEY**

(LIFE AND CONTACTS)

“VOCAT ÆSTUS IN UMBRAM”

*Nemesianus Ec. IV.*

# ODE POUR L'ELECTION DE SON SEPULCHRE

## I

FOR three years, out of key with his time,  
He strove to resuscitate the dead art  
Of poetry; to maintain “the sublime”  
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—

No, hardly but, seeing he had been born  
In a half savage country, out of date;  
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;  
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Ἰδυσεν λάρ τοι πάνθ’, ὅς’ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ  
Caught in the unstopped ear;  
Giving the rocks small lee-way  
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,  
He fished by obstinate isles;  
Observed the elegance of Circe’s hair  
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by “the march of events,”  
He passed from men’s memory in *l’an trentiesme*  
*De son eage*; the case presents  
No adjunct to the Muses’ diadem.

## II

THE age demanded an image  
Of its accelerated grimace,  
Something for the modern stage,  
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries  
Of the inward gaze;  
Better mendacities  
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The “age demanded” chiefly a mould in plaster,  
Made with no loss of time,  
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster  
Or the “sculpture” of rhyme.

### III

THE tea-rose tea-gown, etc.  
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,  
The pianola “replaces”  
Sappho’s barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,  
Phallic and ambrosial  
Made way for macerations;  
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing,  
Sage Heracleitus says;  
But a tawdry cheapness  
Shall outlast our days.

Even the Christian beauty  
Defects—after Samothrace;  
We see τὸ καλόν  
Decreed in the market place.

Faun’s flesh is not to us,  
Nor the saint’s vision.  
We have the press for wafer;  
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.  
Free of Peisistratus,  
We choose a knave or an eunuch  
To rule over us.

O bright Apollo,  
τὴν’ ἄνδρα, τὴν’ ἥρωά, τίνα θεόν,  
Shall I place a tin wreath upon!



## IV

THESE fought in any case,  
and some believing, pro domo, in any case ...

Some quick to arm,  
some for adventure,  
some from fear of weakness,  
some from fear of censure,  
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,  
learning later ...

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;  
Died some pro patria, non dulce non et decor” ...  
walked eye-deep in hell  
believing in old men’s lies, then unbelieving  
came home, home to a lie,  
home to many deceits,  
home to old lies and new infamy;  
usury age-old and age-thick  
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.  
Young blood and high blood,  
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,  
disillusions as never told in the old days,  
hysterias, trench confessions,  
laughter out of dead bellies.

## V

THERE died a myriad,  
And of the best, among them,  
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,  
For a botched civilization,  
  
Charm, smiling at the good mouth,  
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,  
  
For two gross of broken statues,  
For a few thousand battered books.

## YEUX GLAUQUES

GLADSTONE was still respected,  
When John Ruskin produced  
“Kings’ Treasuries”; Swinburne  
And Rossetti still abused.

Fœtid Buchanan lifted up his voice  
When that faun’s head of hers  
Became a pastime for  
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons  
Have preserved her eyes;  
Still, at the Tate, they teach  
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,  
With a vacant gaze.  
The English Rubaiyat was still-born  
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same  
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin’d face,  
Questing and passive....  
“Ah, poor Jenny’s case” ...

Bewildered that a world  
Shows no surprise  
At her last maquero’s  
Adulteries.

## **“SIENA MI FE’; DISFEÇEMI MAREMMA”**

AMONG the pickled foetuses and bottled bones,  
Engaged in perfecting the catalogue,  
I found the last scion of the  
Senatorial families of Strasbourg, Monsieur Verog.

For two hours he talked of Gallifet;  
Of Dowson; of the Rhymers’ Club;  
Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died  
By falling from a high stool in a pub ...

But showed no trace of alcohol  
At the autopsy, privately performed—  
Tissue preserved—the pure mind  
Arose toward Newman as the whiskey warmed.

Dowson found harlots cheaper than hotels;  
Headlam for uplift; Image impartially imbued  
With raptures for Bacchus, Terpsichore and the Church.  
So spoke the author of “The Dorian Mood,”

M. Verog, out of step with the decade,  
Detached from his contemporaries,  
Neglected by the young,  
Because of these reveries.

**BRENNBAUM**

*T*HE sky-like limpid eyes,  
The circular infant's face,  
The stiffness from spats to collar  
Never relaxing into grace;  
The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and the forty years,  
Showed only when the daylight fell  
Level across the face  
Of Brennbaum "The Impeccable."

## MR NIXON

IN the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht  
Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer  
Dangers of delay. “Consider  
“Carefully the reviewer.

“I was as poor as you are;  
“When I began I got, of course,  
“Advance on royalties, fifty at first,” said Mr. Nixon,  
“Follow me, and take a column,  
“Even if you have to work free.

“Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred  
“I rose in eighteen months;  
“The hardest nut I had to crack  
“Was Dr. Dundas.

“I never mentioned a man but with the view  
“Of selling my own works.  
“The tip’s a good one, as for literature  
“It gives no man a sinecure.

“And no one knows, at sight a masterpiece.  
“And give up verse, my boy,  
“There’s nothing in it.”

.....

Likewise a friend of Bloughram’s once advised me:  
Don’t kick against the pricks,  
Accept opinion. The “Nineties” tried your game  
And died, there’s nothing in it.

## X

BENEATH the sagging roof  
The stylist has taken shelter,  
Unpaid, uncelebrated,  
At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him,  
With a placid and uneducated mistress  
He exercises his talents  
And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions  
Leaks through its thatch;  
He offers succulent cooking;  
The door has a creaking latch.



## XI

CONSERVATRIX of Milésien”

Habits of mind and feeling,

Possibly. But in Ealing

With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen?

No, “Milésian” is an exaggeration.

No instinct has survived in her

Older than those her grandmother

Told her would fit her station.



DAPHNE with her thighs in bark  
Stretches toward me her leafy hands,”—  
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room  
I await The Lady Valentine’s commands,

Knowing my coat has never been  
Of precisely the fashion  
To stimulate, in her,  
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value  
Of well-gowned approbation  
Of literary effort,  
But never of The Lady Valentine’s vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,  
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending  
With other strata  
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane’s attention,  
A modulation toward the theatre,  
Also, in the case of revolution,  
A possible friend and comforter.

. . . . .

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul  
“Which the highest cultures have nourished”  
To Fleet St. where  
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare  
The sale of half-hose has  
Long since superseded the cultivation  
Of Pierian roses.

## ENVOI (1919)

**G**O, dumb-born book,  
*Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes;  
Hadst thou but song  
As thou hast subjects known,  
Then were there cause in thee that should condone  
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie  
And build her glories their longevity.*

*Tell her that sheds  
Such treasure in the air,  
Reeking naught else but that her graces give  
Life to the moment,  
I would bid them live  
As roses might, in magic amber laid,  
Red overwrought with orange and all made  
One substance and one colour  
Braving time.*

*Tell her that goes  
With song upon her lips  
But sings not out the song, nor knows  
The maker of it, some other mouth,  
May be as fair as hers,  
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,  
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,  
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,  
Till change hath broken down  
All things save Beauty alone.*

**1920 (MAUBERLEY)**

# I

TURNED from the “eau-forte  
Par Jaquemart”  
To the strait head  
Of Messalina:

“His true Penelope  
Was Flaubert,”  
And his tool  
The engraver’s.

Firmness,  
Not the full smile,  
His art, but an art  
In profile;

Colourless  
Pier Francesca,  
Pisanello lacking the skill  
To forge Achaia.

## II

*“Qu’est ce qu’ils savent de l’amour, et  
qu’est ce qu’ils peuvent comprendre?”*

*S’ils ne comprennent pas la poésie,  
s’ils ne sentent pas la musique, qu’est ce  
qu’ils peuvent comprendre de cette passion  
en comparaison avec laquelle la rose  
est grossière et le parfum des violettes un  
tonnerre?”* CAID ALI

For three years, diabolus in the scale,  
He drank ambrosia,  
All passes, ANANGKE prevails,  
Came end, at last, to that Arcadia.

He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,  
Amid her galaxies,  
NUKTIS AGALMA

.....  
Drifted ... drifted precipitate,  
Asking time to be rid of...  
Of his bewilderment; to designate  
His new found orchid....

To be certain ... certain ...  
(Amid ærial flowers) ... time for arrangements—  
Drifted on  
To the final estrangement;  
Unable in the supervening blankness  
To sift TO AGATHON from the chaff

Until he found his seive....  
Ultimately, his seismograph:

—Given that is his “fundamental passion”  
This urge to convey the relation  
Of eye-lid and cheek-bone  
By verbal manifestations;

To present the series  
Of curious heads in medallion—

He had passed, inconscient, full gaze,  
The wide-banded irises  
And botticellian sprays implied  
In their diastasis;

Which anæsthesia, noted a year late,  
And weighed, revealed his great affect,  
(Orchid), mandate  
Of Eros, a retrospect.

. . .

Mouths biting empty air,  
The still stone dogs,  
Caught in metamorphosis, were  
Left him as epilogues.



# **“THE AGE DEMANDED”**

VIDE POEM II. PAGE 54

FOR this agility chance found  
Him of all men, unfit  
As the red-beaked steeds of  
The Cytheræan for a chain bit.

The glow of porcelain  
Brought no reforming sense  
To his perception  
Of the social inconsequence.

Thus, if her colour  
Came against his gaze,  
Tempered as if  
It were through a perfect glaze

He made no immediate application  
Of this to relation of the state  
To the individual, the month was more temperate  
Because this beauty had been.

.....

The coral isle, the lion-coloured sand  
Burst in upon the porcelain revery:  
Impetuous troubling  
Of his imagery.

.....

Mildness, amid the neo-Neitzschean clatter,  
His sense of graduations,  
Quite out of place amid  
Resistance to current exacerbations,  
Invitation, more invitation to perceptivity.

invitation, mere invitation to perceptivity  
Gradually led him to the isolation  
Which these presents place  
Under a more tolerant, perhaps, examination.

By constant elimination  
The manifest universe  
Yielded an armour  
Against utter consternation,

A Minoan undulation,  
Seen, we admit, amid ambrosial circumstances  
Strengthened him against  
The discouraging doctrine of chances,

And his desire for survival,  
Faint in the most strenuous moods,  
Became an Olympian *apathein*  
In the presence of selected perceptions.

A pale gold, in the aforesaid pattern,  
The unexpected palms  
Destroying, certainly, the artist's urge,  
Left him delighted with the imaginary  
Audition of the phantasmal sea-surge,

Incapable of the least utterance or composition,  
Emendation, conservation of the "better tradition"  
Refinement of medium, elimination of superfluities,  
August attraction or concentration.

Nothing, in brief, but maudlin confession  
Irresponse to human aggression,  
Amid the precipitation, down-float  
Of insubstantial manna,  
Lifting the faint susurrus  
Of his subjective hosannah.

Ultimate affronts to human redundancies;

Non-esteem of self-styled “his betters”

Leading, as he well knew,

To his final

Exclusion from the world of letters.

## IV

### SCATTERED Moluccas

Not knowing, day to day,  
The first day's end, in the next noon;  
The placid water  
Unbroken by the Simoon;

Thick foliage  
Placid beneath warm suns,  
Tawn fore-shores  
Washed in the cobalt of oblivions;

Or through dawn-mist  
The grey and rose  
Of the juridical  
Flamingoes;

A consciousness disjunct,  
Being but this overblotted  
Series  
Of intermittences;  
Coracle of Pacific voyages,  
The unforecasted beach:  
Then on an oar  
Read this:

"I was  
And I no more exist;  
Here drifted  
An hedonist."

## MEDALLION

LUINI in porcelain!

The grand piano  
Utters a profane  
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges  
From the gold-yellow frock  
As Anadyomene in the opening  
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,  
A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were  
Spun in King Minos' hall  
From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,  
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,  
Beneath half-watt rays,  
The eyes turn topaz.

# CANTOS

## THE FOURTH CANTO

PALACE in smoky light,  
Troy but a heap of smouldering boundary-stones,  
ANAXIFORMINGES! Aurunculeia!  
Hear me. Cadmus of Golden Prows!  
The silver mirrors catch the bright stones and flare,  
Dawn, to our waking, drifts in the green cool light;  
Dew-haze blurs, in the grass, pale ankles moving.  
Beat, beat, whirr, thud, in the soft turf under the apple trees,  
Choros nympharum, goat-foot with the pale foot alternate;  
Crescent of blue-shot waters, green-gold in the shallows,  
A black cock crows in the sea-foam;

And by the curved carved foot of the couch,  
          claw-foot and lion head, an old man seated  
Speaking in the low drone: ...

“Ityn!

“Et ter flebiliter. Ityn, Ityn!

“And she went toward the window and cast her down,

          “All the while, the while, swallows crying:

“Ityn!”

“ *“It is Cabestan’s heart in the dish.”*

“ *“It is Cabestan’s heart in the dish?”*

“ *“No other taste shall change this.”*

And she went toward the window,  
          the slim white stone bar

Making a double arch;

Firm even fingers held to the firm pale stone;

Swung for a moment,

          and the wind out of Rhodéz

Caught in the full of her sleeve.

... the swallows crying:

“Ityn! Ityn!”

Actaeon....

And a valley,

The valley is thick with leaves, with leaves, the trees,

The sunlight glitters, glitters a-top,

Like a fish-scale roof,

Like the church-roof in Poitiers

If it were gold.

Beneath it, beneath it

Not a ray, not a slivver, not a spare disk of sunlight

Flaking the black, soft water;

Bathing the body of nymphs, of nymphs, and Diana,

Nymphs, white-gathered about her, and the air, air,

Shaking, air alight with the goddess

fanning their hair in the dark,

Lifting, lifting and waffing:

Ivory dipping in silver,

Shadow'd, o'ershadow'd

Ivory dipping in silver,

Not a splotch, not a lost shatter of sunlight.

Then Actaeon: Vidal,

Vidal. It is old Vidal speaking,

stumbling along in the wood,

Not a patch, not a lost shimmer of sunlight,

the pale hair of the goddess.

The dogs leap on Actaeon,

“Hither, hither, Actaeon,”

Spotted stag of the wood;

Gold, gold, a sheaf of hair,

Thick like a wheat swath,

Blaze, blaze in the sun,



Stumbling, stumbling along in the wood,  
Muttering, muttering Ovid:  
    “Pergusa ... pool ... pool ... Gargaphia,  
“Pool, pool of Salmacis.”

    The empty armour shakes as the cygnet moves.  
Thus the light rains, thus pours, *e lo soleils plovil*,  
The liquid, and rushing crystal  
                whirls up the bright brown sand.  
Ply over ply, thin glitter of water;  
Brook film bearing white petals  
    (“The pines of Takasago grow with pines of Isé”)  
    “Behold the Tree of the Visages.”  
The forked tips flaming as if with lotus,  
    Ply over ply  
The shallow eddying fluid  
                beneath the knees of the gods.

Torches melt in the glare  
 Set flame of the corner cook-stall,  
 Blue agate casing the sky, a sputter of resin;  
 The saffron sandal petals the narrow foot, Hymenaeus!  
 Io Hymen, Io Hymenae! Aurunculeia!  
 The scarlet flower is cast on the blanch-white stone,  
 Armaracus, Hill of Urania's Son.  
 Meanwhile So-Gioku:  
 "This wind, sire, is the king's wind,  
     this wind is wind of the palace  
 Shaking imperial water-jets."  
 And Ran-Ti, opening his collar:  
 "This wind roars in the earth's bag,  
     it lays the water with rushes;  
 "No wind is the king's wind.  
 Let every cow keep her calf."  
 "This wind is held in gauze curtains...."  
 "No wind is the king's   "

THE WIND IS THE KING S....

The camel drivers sit in the turn of the stairs,  
look down to Ecbatan of plotted streets,  
“Danae! Danae!

What wind is the king’s?”

Smoke hangs on the stream,  
The peach-trees shed bright leaves in the water,  
Sound drifts in the evening haze,  
The barge scrapes at the ford.

Gilt rafters above black water;  
three steps in an open field  
Gray stone-posts leading nowhither.

The Spanish poppies swim in an air of glass.  
Père Henri Jacques still seeks the sennin on Rokku.

Polhonac,

As Gyges on Thracian platter, set the feast;  
Cabestan, Terreus.

It is Cabestan’s heart in the dish.  
Vidal, tracked out with dogs ... for glamour of Loba;  
Upon the gilded tower in Ecbatan  
Lay the god’s bride, lay ever  
Waiting the golden rain.

Et saave!

But to-day, Garonne is thick like paint, beyond Dorada,  
The worm of the Procession bores in the soup of the crowd  
The blue thin voices against the crash of the crowd  
Et “Salve regina.”

In trellises

Wound over with small flowers, beyond Adige  
In the but half-used room, thin film of images,  
(by Stefano)

Age of unbodied gods, the vitreous fragile images  
Thin as the locust’s wing  
Haunting the mind ... as of Guido ...

Thin as the locust's wing. The Centaur's heel  
Plants in the earth-loam.

## THE FIFTH CANTO

GREAT bulk, huge mass, thesaurus;  
Ecbatan, the clock ticks and fades out;  
The bride awaiting the god's touch; Ecbatan,  
City of patterned streets; again the vision:  
Down in the viae stradae, toga'd the crowd, and arm'd,  
Rushing on populous business, and from parapets  
Looked down—I looked, and thought: at North  
Was Egypt, and the celestial Nile, blue-deep, cutting low barren land,  
Old men and camels working the water-wheels;  
Measureless seas and stars,  
Iamblichus' light, the souls ascending,  
Sparks, like a partridge covey,  
From the “ciocco,” brand struck in the game,  
“Et omniformis”:  
Air, fire, the pale soft light.  
Topaz, I manage, and three sorts of blue;  
but on the barb of time.  
The fire? always, and the vision always,  
Ear dull, perhaps, with the vision, flitting  
And fading at will. Weaving with points of gold,  
Gold-yellow, saffron ...  
the Roman shoe, Aurunculeia's  
And come shuffling feet, and cries “Da nuces!  
“Nuces” praise and Hymenaeus “brings the girl to her man,”  
Titter of sound about me, always  
and from Hesperus ...  
Hush of the older song: “Fades light from seacrest.  
  
“And in Lydia walks with pair'd women  
“Peerless among the pairs, and that once in Sardis  
“The satisfaction

in sauetes ...

“Fades the light from the sea, and many things  
“Are set abroad and brought to mind of thee,”  
And the vinestocks lie untended, new leaves come to the shoots,  
North wind nips on the bough, and seas in heart  
Toss up chill crests,

And the vine stocks lie untended  
And many things are set abroad and brought to mind  
Of thee, Atthis, unfruitful.

The talks ran long in the night.

And from Mauleon, fresh with a new earned grade,  
In maze of approaching rain-steps, Poicebot—  
The air was full of women. And Savairic Mauleon  
Gave him his land and knight’s fee, and he wed the woman.  
Came lust of travel on him, of *romerya*;  
And out of England a knight with slow-lifting eyelids  
*Lei fassa furar a del*, put glamour upon her ...

And left her an eight months gone.

Came lust of woman upon him,  
Poicebot, now on North road from Spain  
(Sea-change, a grey in the water)

And in small house by town’s edge  
Found a woman, changed and familiar face,  
Hard night, and parting at morning.

And Pieire won the singing,  
Song or land on the throw, Pieire de Maensac,  
and was dreitz hom  
And had De Tierci’s wife and with the war they made,  
Troy in Auvergnat.

While Menelaus piled up the church at port  
He kept Tyndarida. Dauphin stood with de Maensac.  
John Borgia is bathed at last.

(Clock-tick pierces the vision)  
Tiber, dark with the cloak, wet cat, gleaming in patches.  
Click of the hooves. through garbage.

Clutching the greasy stone. “And the cloak floated”  
Slander is up betimes.

But Varchi of Florence,  
Steeped in a different year, and pondering Brutus,  
Then

SIGA MAL AUTHIS DEUTERON!

“Dog-eye!!” (to Alessandro)

“Whether for Love of Florence,” Varchi leaves it,  
Saying, “I saw the man, came up with him at Venice,  
“I, one wanting the facts,  
“And no mean labour.

Or for a privy spite?”

Good Varchi leaves it,

But: “I saw the man. *Se pia?*

“*O empia?* For Lorenzaccio had thought of stroke in the open

“But uncertain (for the Duke went never unguarded) ...

“And would have thrown him from wall

“Yet feared this might not end him, or lest Alessandro

“Know not by whom death came,

O si credesse

“If when the foot slipped, when death came upon him,

“Lest cousin Duke Alessandro think he had fallen alone

“No friend to aid him in falling.”

*Caina attende.*

As beneath my feet a lake, was ice in seeming.

And all of this, runs Varchi, dreamed out before hand

In Perugia, caught in the star-maze by Del Carmine,

Cast on a natal paper, set with an exegesis, told,

All told to Alessandro, told thrice over,

Who held his death for a doom.

In abuleia.

But Don Lorenzino

“Whether for love of Florence ... but:

“O si morisse, credesse caduto da se.”

SIGA, SIGA!

The wet cloak floats on the surface,  
Schiavoni, caught on the wood-barge,  
Gives out the afterbirth, Giovanni Borgia  
Trails out no more at night, where Barabello  
Prods the Pope's elephant, and gets no crown, where Mozarello  
Takes the Calabrian roadway, and for ending  
Is smothered beneath a mule,

a poet's ending,  
Down a stale well-hole, oh a poet's ending. "Sanazarro  
"Alone out of all the court was faithful to him"  
For the gossip of Naples' trouble drifts to North,  
Fracastor (lightning was midwife) Cotta, and Ser D'Alviano,  
Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra,  
Talk the talks out with Navighero,  
Burner of yearly Martials,

(The slavelet is mourned in vain)

And the next comer

says "were nine wounds,  
"Four men, white horse with a double rider,"  
The hooves clink and slick on the cobbles ...  
Schiavoni ... the cloak floats on the water,  
"Sink the thing," splash wakes Schiavoni;  
Tiber catching the nap, the moonlit velvet,  
Wet cat, gleaming in patches.

"Se pia," Varchi,  
"O empia, ma risoluto  
"E terribile deliberazione"

Both sayings run in the wind,  
Ma si morisse!

## THE SIXTH CANTO

THE tale of thy deeds Odysseus!" and Tolosan  
Ground rents, sold by Guillaume, ninth duke of Aquitaine;  
Till Louis is wed with Eleanor; the wheel ...  
("Conrad, the wheel turns and in the end turns ill")  
And Acre and boy's love ... for her uncle was  
Commandant at Acre, she was pleased with him;  
And Louis, French King, was jealous of days unshared  
This pair had had together in years gone;  
And he drives on for Zion, as "God wills"  
To find, in six weeks time, the Queen's scarf is  
Twisted a-top the casque of Saladin.  
"For Sandbrueil's ransom." But the pouch-mouths add,  
"She went out hunting, and the palm-tufts  
"Give shade above mottled columns, and she rode back late,  
"Late, latish, yet perhaps it was not too late."  
Then France again, and to be rid of her  
To brush his antlers: Poitiers, Aquitaine!  
And Adelaide Castilla wears the crown.  
Eleanor down water-butt, dethroned, debased, unqueen'd.  
Unqueen'd five rare long months,  
And face sand-red, pitch gait, Harry Plantagenet,  
The sputter in place of speech,  
But King, about to be, King Louis! takes a queen.  
"E quand lo reis Louis lo entendit  
mout er fasché"  
And yet Gisors, in six years thence,  
Was Marguerite's. And Harry *joven*  
In pledge for all his life and life of all his heirs  
Shall have Gisors and Vexis and Neauphal, Neufchastel;  
But if no issue, Gisors shall revert



And Vexis and Neufchastel and Neauphal to the French crown.

*“Si tuit li dol el plor el marrimen*

*Del mon* were set together they would seem but light

Against the death of the young English King,

Harry the Young is dead and all men mourn, a song,

Mourn all good courtiers, fighters, cantadors.”

And still Old Harry keeps grip on Gisors

And Neufchastel and Neauphal and Vexis;

And two years war, and never two years go by

but come new forays, and “The wheel

“Turns, Conrad, turns, and in the end toward ill.”

And Richard and Alix span the gap, Gisors,

And Eleanor and Richard face the King,

For the fourth family time Plantagenet

Faces his dam and whelps, ... and holds Gisors,

Now Alix’ dowry, against Philippe-Auguste

(Louis’ by Adelaide, wood-lost, then crowned at Etampe)

And never two years sans war.

And Zion still

Bleating away to Eastward, the lost lamb,

Damned city (was only Frederic knew

The true worth of, and patched with Malek Kamel

The sane and sensible peace to bait the world

And set all camps disgruntled with all leaders.

“Damn’d atheists!” alike Mahomet growls,

And Christ grutches more sullen for Sicilian sense

Than does Mahound on Malek.)

The bright coat

Is more to the era, and in Messina’s beach-way

Des Barres and Richard split the reed-lances

And the coat is torn.

(Moving in heavy air: Henry and Saladin.)

(The serpent coils in the crowd.)

The letters run: Tancred to Richard:

That the French King is

More against thee, than is his will to me

more against thee, than is his will to me  
Good and in faith; and moves against your safety.

Richard to Tancred:

That our pact stands firm,  
And, for these slanders, that I think you lie.

Proofs, and in writing:

And if Bourgogne say they were not  
Deliver'd by hand and his,  
Let him move sword against me and my word.

Richard to Philip: silence, with a tone.

Richard to Flanders: the subjoined and precedent.

Philip a silence; and then, "Lies and turned lies  
"For that he will fail Alix  
"Affianced, and Sister to Ourself."

Richard: "My father's bed-piece! A Plantagenet  
"Mewls on the covers, with a nose like his, already."

Then:

In the Name  
Of Father and of Son Triune and Indivisible  
Philip of France by Goddes Grace  
To all men presents that our noble brother  
Richard of England engaged by mutual oath  
(a sacred covenant applicable to both)  
Need *not* wed Alix but whomso he choose  
We cede him Gisors Neauphal and Vexis  
And to the heirs male of his house  
Cahors and Querci Richard's the abbeyes ours  
Of Figeac and Souillac St. Gilles left still in peace  
Alix returns to France.

Made in Messina in  
The year 1190 of the Incarnation of the Word.

Reed lances broken, a cloak torn by Des Barres  
Do turn King Richard from the holy wars.

And “God aid Conrad  
“For man’s aid comes slow,” Aye tarries upon the road,  
En Bertrans cantat.

And before all this  
By Correze, Malemort  
A young man walks, at church with galleried porch  
By river-marsh, pacing,  
He was come from Ventadorn; and Eleanor turning on thirty years,  
Domna jauzionda, and he says to her  
“My lady of Ventadorn  
“Is shut by Eblis in, and will not hawk nor hunt  
“Nor get her free in the air,  
nor watch fish rise to bait  
“Nor the glare-wing’d flies alight in the creek’s edge  
“Save in my absence, Madame.  
‘*Que la lauzeta mover,*’  
“Send word, I ask you, to Eblis,  
you have seen that maker  
“And finder of songs, so far afield as this  
“That he may free her,  
who sheds such light in the air.”

# THE SEVENTH CANTO

ELEANOR (she spoiled in a British climate)

‘Ελανδρος and Ελέπολις, and poor old Homer  
blind, blind as a bat,

Ear, ear for the sea-surge—; rattle of old men’s voices;  
And then the phantom Rome, marble narrow for seats

“Si pulvis nullus....”

In chatter above the circus, “Nullum excute tamen.”

Then: file and candles, e li mestiers ecoutes;

Scene—for the battle only,—but still scene,

Pennons and standards y cavals armatz,

Not mere succession of strokes, sightless narration,

To Dante’s “ciocco,” the brand struck in the game.

Un peu moisi, plancher plus bas que le jardin.

Contre le lambris, fauteuil de paille,

Un vieux piano, et sous le baromètre ...

The old men’s voices—beneath the columns of false marble,

And the walls tinted discreet, the modish, darkish green-blue,

Discreeter gilding, and the panelled wood

Not present, but suggested, for the leasehold is

Touched with an imprecision ... about three squares;

The house a shade too solid, and the art

A shade off action, paintings a shade too thick.

And the great domed head, *con gli occhi onesti e tardi*

Moves before me, phantom with weighted motion,

*Grave incessu*, drinking the tone of things,

And the old voice lifts itself

weaving an endless sentence.

We also made ghostly visits, and the stair

That knew us, found us again on the turn of it,

Knocking at empty rooms, seeking a buried beauty;

And the sun-tanned gracious and well-formed fingers

Lift no latch of bent bronze, no Empire handle

Twists for the knocker’s fall; no voice to answer.

A strange concierge, in place of the gouty-footed.

~~~~~

Sceptic against all this one seeks the living,  
Stubborn against the fact. The wilted flowers  
Brushed out a seven year since, of no effect.  
Damn the partition! Paper, dark brown and stretched,  
Flimsy and damned partition.

Ione, dead the long year,  
My lintel, and Liu Ch'e's lintel.  
Time blacked out with the rubber.

The Elysée carries a name on  
And the bus behind me gives me a date for peg;  
Low ceiling and the Erard and silver,  
These are in "time." Four chairs, the bow-front dresser,  
The pannier of the desk, cloth top sunk in.

"Beer-bottle on the statue's pediment!  
"That, Fritz, is the era, to-day against the past,  
"Contemporary." And the passion endures.  
Against their action, aromas; rooms, against chronicles.  
Smaragdos, chrysolitos, De Gama wore striped pants in Africa  
And "Mountains of the sea gave birth to troops,"

Le vieux commode en acajou:

beer bottles of various strata.  
But is she as dead as Tyro? In seven years?  
Ἑλέναυς, ἑλάνδρος, ἐλέπτολις,  
The sea runs in the beach-groove, shaking the floated pebbles,  
Eleanor!

The scarlet curtain throws a less scarlet shadow;  
Lamplight at Buovilla, e quel remir,

And all that day  
Nicea moved before me  
And the cold gray air troubled her not  
For all her naked beauty, bit not the tropic skin,  
And the long slender feet lit on the curb's marge  
And her moving height went before me,  
We alone having being.

And all that day another day:

And on that day, another day.

Thin husks I had known as men,  
Dry casques of departed locusts  
speaking a shell of speech ...  
Propped between chairs and table ...  
Words like the locust-shells, moved by no inner being,  
A dryness calling for death.

Another day, between walls of a sham Mycenian,  
“Toc” sphinxes, sham-Memphis columns,  
And beneath the jazz a cortex, a stiffness or stillness;  
The older shell, varnished to lemon colour,  
Brown-yellow wood, and the no colour plaster,  
Dry professorial talk ...

now stilling the ill beat music,  
House expelled by this house, but not extinguished.

Square even shoulders and the satin skin,  
Gone cheeks of the dancing woman,  
Still the old dead dry talk, gassed out  
It is ten years gone, makes stiff about her a glass,  
A petrification of air.

The old room of the tawdry class asserts itself.  
The young men, never!

Only the husk of talk.  
O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,  
Dido choked up with sobs for her Sicheus  
Lies heavy in my arms, dead weight

Drowning with tears, new Eros,  
And the life goes on, mooning upon bare hills;  
Flame leaps from the hand, the rain is listless,  
Yet drinks the thirst from our lips,

solid as echo,  
Passion to breed a form in shimmer of rain-blurr;  
But Eros drowned, drowned, heavy-half dead with tears  
For dead Sicheus.

Life to make mock of motion:  
For the husks, before me, move,  
The words rattle: shells given out by shells

The live man, out of lands and prisons,  
                                        shakes the dry pods,  
Probes for old wills and friendships, and the big locust-casques  
Bend to the tawdry table,  
Lift up their spoons to mouths, put forks in cutlets,  
And make sound like the sound of voices.

# Lorenzaccio

Being more live than they, more full of flames and voices.  
Ma si morisse!

Credesse caduto da se, ma si morisse.

And the tall indifference moves,  
     a more living shell,  
 Drift in the air of fate, dry phantom, but intact,  
 O Alessandro, chief and thrice warned, watcher,  
     Eternal watcher of things,  
 Of things, of men, of passions.

Eyes floating in dry, dark air;

E biondo, with glass-gray iris, with an even side-fall of hair  
The stiff, still features.





\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS  
1918-21, INCLUDING THREE PORTRAITS AND FOUR  
CANTOS \*\*\*

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